United Nations S/PV.8274

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8274th meeting
Friday, 1 June 2018, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Nebenzia	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Djédjé
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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The meeting was called to order at 3.55 p.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Security Council, to pay tribute to Her Excellency Ambassador Joanna Wronecka, Permanent Representative of Poland to the United Nations, for her service as President of the Council for the month of May. I am sure I speak for all members of the Security Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Wronecka and her team for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Israel to participate in this meeting.

I propose that the Council invite the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in this meeting, in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2018/516, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Kuwait. The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution.

I shall first give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of June. We wish you every success. I would also like to join you in expressing our thanks to Her Excellency Ambassador Joanna Wronecka of Poland for the outstanding professionalism she demonstrated in presiding over the Security Council last month, which was a very busy one.

In the past two weeks we have had two rounds of negotiations at the expert level with the participation of all the members of the Council, as well as meetings with all Member States, all of which have been extremely transparent, comprehensive and inclusive. We have listened to every proposed amendment and suggestion and have worked hard to take into account all the issues raised. We would like to thank all the members of the Council for their positive attitude and constructive participation in the preparation of draft resolution S/2018/516, which we are submitting for a vote today.

We urge all members to vote in favour of the draft resolution, the text of which has been agreed on and includes wording from previous resolutions and presidential statements. It calls on all the relevant parties to respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including with regard to the protection of civilians, and reaffirms the importance of taking the necessary measures to save and protect civilians and hold all perpetrators of violations accountable. It highlights the need to respect international humanitarian law in all circumstances in line with common article 1 to the Geneva Conventions. It also calls upon the Secretary-General to investigate the recent events in the occupied territories and to submit a written report as soon as possible within 60 days from the adoption of the draft resolution, which should include, inter alia, proposals on the ways and means to ensure the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilian population under Israeli occupation, including recommendations on international protection mechanism.

In these critical circumstances, we again call upon Member States to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): I congratulate the Russian Federation on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of June. I want to thank the Polish Mission for what it did last to help make everything go smoothly. Before I get started, I would like to clarify for my Kuwaiti colleague that they did not take into account everyone's edits, because we had quite a few, and there were concerns in the Security Council at the fact that Hamas was not mentioned in the draft resolution (S/2018/516).

The draft resolution presented by Kuwait represents a grossly one-sided view of what has taken place in Gaza in recent weeks. Anyone who cares about the peace process should vote against it. But make no

mistake: regardless of how others choose to vote, the United States will oppose the draft resolution and we will veto it if we must.

The terrorist group Hamas bears primary responsibility for the awful living conditions in Gaza. It is Hamas that has served as the de facto Government of Gaza for last 11 years. It is Hamas that has consistently diverted humanitarian assistance into military infrastructure, building rockets instead of schools and terror tunnels instead of hospitals. It is Hamas that has attacked the very humanitarian access points into Gaza that are lifelines for the Palestinian people. It is Hamas and its allies that fired rockets — at least 70 of them this week alone, indiscriminately — into Israeli communities. It is Hamas that has incited violent acts at the boundary fence, purposely infiltrating its terrorist fighters among civilians and deliberately using innocent people as human shields. It is Hamas that openly calls for the destruction of the State of Israel. It is Hamas that refuses to cooperate with the Palestinian Authority to unite in the pursuit of peace. And yet Kuwait's draft resolution makes no mention of Hamas, none at all.

Instead the draft resolution places all the blame on Israel. Kuwait actually blames Israel for Hamas firing rockets onto a kindergarten playground in Israel. It conveniently ignores the fact that there is not one single Israeli settlement or soldier in Gaza — there have not been any since 2005. It ignores the fact that, according to Hamas officials themselves, the majority of those killed by Israeli Defence Forces in recent weeks were members of the Hamas terrorist group, not peaceful civilians. Finally, the draft resolution perpetuates the bias towards Israel that has long been the hallmark of the United Nations.

It is draft resolutions like this one that undermine the credibility of the United Nations in dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Because this draft resolution is wildly inaccurate in its characterization of recent events in Gaza and because it would harm any efforts aimed at achieving peace, the United States will oppose it and will veto it if necessary. But there is an alternative.

For those who are able to bring themselves to recognize the reality that Hamas terrorism is a considerable factor in the recent unrest and for the terrible conditions in Gaza, we are offering a separate draft resolution (S/2018/520). This draft resolution rightly places responsibility where it belongs. It includes many features that Kuwait's draft resolution lacks. It condemns the indiscriminate firing of rockets by Hamas against Israeli civilian communities. It condemns Hamas diversion of resources into military infrastructure. It demands that Hamas stop its deliberate efforts to put Palestinian civilians at risk at the boundary fence. By offering this draft resolution, we are giving members of the Security Council additional options.

They can choose to condemn the terrorists who are responsible for inciting violence in Gaza and against condemning a country for acting in self-defence, just as any of us would do. They can choose to cast their votes in ways that condemn both parties or neither party. Finally, they can make the choice to vote in favour of the Kuwaiti draft resolution and against the American draft resolution. In doing that, they would make it clear that they believe that all responsibility lies with Israel and none lies with the Hamas terrorist group.

The situation in Gaza is truly tragic. No one should have to live in such conditions. The United States remains fully determined to pursue a long-term peace agreement between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Such an agreement would benefit the entire Middle East region, and most especially the Palestinian and Israeli peoples. But a necessary precondition for peace is recognition of reality. One of those realities is that Hamas is a major impediment to peace. It is in charge of Gaza and it uses its resources not to help the people of Gaza but to wage war against Israel.

Another reality is when the United Nations sides with terrorists over Israel, as the Kuwaiti draft resolution does, it only makes a peaceful resolution of this conflict harder to reach. We strongly encourage the Security Council to vote against Kuwait's draft resolution and to acknowledge the concerns about Hamas by voting in favour of the United States draft resolution. Everyone at this table has a choice — either to support Hamas or not. This vote will tell the story.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall first put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/2018/516, submitted by Kuwait.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, France, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Peru, Russian Federation, Sweden

Against:
United States of America

Abstaining:
Ethiopia, Netherlands, Poland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The draft resolution received 10 votes in favour, one against and four abstentions. The draft resolution has not been adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): The draft resolution (S/2018/516), which was not adopted by the Security Council owing to the veto by the United States, was submitted by us on behalf of the Group of Arab States, as Kuwait is the Arab member of the Council at present. This draft resolution was also supported by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation at its extraordinary emergency summit, held recently in Istanbul. We deplore that the Council failed to adopt the draft resolution, which stipulated that international protection should be provided to the Palestinian people. The past few days have shown that the Palestinian people, as a result of the tragic situation in which they live, are in dire need of swaying our conscience to provide them with the protection they require in the face of the massacres perpetrated against them by Israel, the occupying Power.

Not only in the light of the most recent protests, but also over the past five decades, international humanitarian law, international human rights law and relevant Security Council resolutions have not been taken into consideration. We would like to thank all countries that voted in favour of the draft resolution for their principled and supportive positions towards the Charter of the United Nations and the international law.

The message sent by the Security Council today in voting against the draft resolution is that the occupying Power is not subject to international law and Security Council resolutions, that it is exempt from accountability and condemnation, and that the Palestinian people, even after repeated Israeli aggressions and violations against their basic rights, do not even deserve a mechanism to provide them with international protection, despite the Council's affirmation and commitment that it protects civilians, in line with many of its resolutions. The message is also that the most recent events, which claimed the lives of hundreds of civilians and thousands of injured people, including women and children, do not deserve an independent and transparent investigation in order to identify the perpetrator, even though we all know who the aggressor is and who is responsible for that.

The Council's failure to assume its responsibilities and to compel the occupying Power to implement Security Council resolutions will exacerbate the situation in the occupying territories and increase the feeling of frustration and despair among Palestinians, which will undoubtedly fuel further violence, instability, hatred and extremism.

I would like in this regard to quote the questions posed to the entire world by the Amir of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, in his address to the seventh extraordinary Summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation which was held in Istanbul on 18 May. He asked,

> "Why must the Palestinians continue to suffer? Why do we ignore Security Council resolutions and fail to implement them? Why does the international community fail to act and resolve the situation? Why does Israel enjoy impunity? Why are all those lives lost? Why is all that blood shed while the entire world remains silent?"

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. President, and I join colleagues in welcoming you to the presidency for this month and saying that the United Kingdom looks forward to working with Russia. I also thank Poland for its very distinguished presidency of the Council.

The United Kingdom remains extremely concerned by the situation in Gaza. We condemn the violent activities of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other terrorist organisations, and we condemn them unreservedly. We have recently witnessed unacceptable mortar and rocket attacks from Gaza into Israel. Such acts of terror are destructive to peace efforts, and they need to stop. In the past weeks, we have seen violence, Hamas' exploitation of peaceful protests and a disturbing volume of live fire. Hamas' military wing has been proscribed as a terrorist organization by the United Kingdom since 2001, and the United Kingdom has sanctions in place against senior Hamas officials.

The recent violence has led to the tragic loss of life of over 100 Palestinians, and we reiterate that there is an urgent need to establish the facts surrounding past weeks' events. The deteriorating situation in Gaza should concentrate our minds on how we can work urgently towards a resolution of the long-standing issues between Israel and the Palestinian people.

The United Kingdom has long supported United Nations action on Israeli-Palestinian issues. It is therefore regrettable that today's draft resolutions S/2018/516 and S/2018/520 contain elements that are either imbalanced or too vague to be viable. For example, the Kuwaiti text fails to name terrorist actors, including Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and its suggestion of an international protection mechanism risks raising unrealistic expectations. We condemn Hamas, but at the same time we regret that the American text does not adequately reference Israel's responsibilities and obligations with regard to Gaza. Therefore, the United Kingdom will abstain in the voting on both draft resolutions today.

I have set out our principled rationale and nothing more should be construed.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Poland on its excellent Security Council presidency in May. I also congratulate Russia on assuming the presidency and wish it every success.

We regret that the Security Council has not been able to achieve consensus on a text. On behalf of realism and pragmatism, and independent of the differences that may exist between us on the content, who could argue that the gravity of the situation in Gaza and the threats to regional stability that result from it do not demand a strong message from the Council?

We are touching on the heart of the Council's responsibility — both its role as recognized by the Charter of the United Nations with regard to peace and security and its historic role in the conflict between Israel and Palestine. It is the Council that, over a number of decades, has defined the main parameters for resolving that conflict, and those same parameters have been rendered fragile by unilateral initiatives. If the Council fails to fulfil its responsibilities today, who will assume them?

After two months in which 120 people have been killed and 4,000 have been left with bullet wounds, and in which the risk of an escalation of the situation in Gaza has never been higher since 2014, as we have seen by the dozens of rockets launched from Gaza into Israeli territory during recent days, the Council is silent. The Council's heavy silence is increasingly deafening. This silence is neither acceptable nor understandable. It is not acceptable to the Palestinian and Israeli people, who are the first victims of the conflict. It is not understandable to the world, which looks to us and harshly judges our inaction in the face of a new conflict in the Middle East. Lastly, it is disastrous for the very credibility of the Council and, more broadly, of multilateralism, which we believe in more than ever.

We have been ready to commit to a constructive discussion on all draft texts presented to Council members over the past few months without exception. There may be difficulties with certain texts, but we believe precisely in the possibility of overcoming those difficulties through discussion. We believe in the possibility of patiently and pragmatically reaching consensus. After all, that is the very heart of our responsibility under the terms of the Charter of the United Nations.

A new opportunity was given to us to overcome this silence by engaging in a discussion on the draft resolution as presented by Kuwait (S/2018/516). The text that was initially presented did present some difficulties. Alongside other members of the Council, we are committed to a rigorous discussion in order to distinctly improve the text and that was the condition that we set in order to provide our support to the text.

The final text is certainly not perfect. We would have liked it to clearly establish Hamas' responsibility and condemn the rocket launches against Israel, for example, but the in-depth consultations carried out over the past two weeks have led to significant improvements. The text that we support today responds to a situation in which, over the past few weeks and in particular on 14 May, when 60 people lost their lives, we have seen a disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force. The text deplores that situation and calls for the right to respect for peaceful protest. It also calls for protection measures to be taken in the Palestinian territories and in particular in Gaza. It requests that the Secretary-General report on the subject within two months.

But the text does not stop there. It responds, at least in part, to the concerns we have voiced. For example,

the text condemns all acts of violence — including terrorist acts — against civilians. It calls on all parties to respect international humanitarian law and human rights. It also condemns any action that could endanger the lives of civilians and calls upon all actors to ensure that protests remain peaceful. It is no longer silent on rocket attacks targeting civilians on Israeli territory. It also recalls that the lifting of the blockade on Gaza, which must take place, should take into account the security concerns of all. As the Council knows, France will never compromise on Israel's security. Finally, the text encourages initiatives that seek long-term improvements to the humanitarian situation in Gaza, pursuant to the proposals of the Special Coordinator of the United Nations, Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, as well as tangible progress in inter-Palestinian reconciliation.

The text ends with a call for relaunching the peace process in order to reach an agreement between the parties within the framework of the two-State solution. All of these elements, like our readiness to allow the Security Council to assume its responsibilities have led us to vote in favour of the draft resolution. The meaning of our work, the very purpose of the Council is to work towards a common understanding and response to threats to peace and security. We once again call on all parties to embark upon this path in good faith and with perseverance. The credibility of the Council and our collective action depend on it.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): The delegation of Kazakhstan congratulates the Russian Federation on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. We wish our colleagues every success in chairing the work of the Council in the month of June. We also commend Ms. Wronecka, her team and Poland, as a whole, for their excellent and professional stewardship of the Council's activities last month.

Kazakhstan voted in favour of the Kuwaiti draft resolution S/2018/516 today because we believe that any type of violence against civilians — including acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction — must be stopped. Lives were lost and we cannot remain silent.

In addressing the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the draft resolution calls on the good offices of the Secretary-General and the use of peacemaking mechanisms of the United Nations in this context. At the same time, the document calls on all parties to refrain from any actions that might aggravate tensions further or lead to a spiralling of conflict from which we could not recover. As a supporter of the draft resolution, we would also like to reiterate our principled position in favour of resolving disputes through peaceful dialogue, confidence-building measures and constructive negotiations between States on the basis of equal responsibility for peace and security.

Astana calls on the world community and conflicting parties to make renewed and urgent efforts to create conditions necessary to relaunch credible negotiations and to achieve, without delay, the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, living side by side in peace and harmony with Israel within secure and recognized borders. That goal should be reached on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map, as called for in resolution 2334 (2016) and other relevant resolutions.

I conclude by calling on all sides to find common ground as peace and security are the only possible solution to this difficult issue.

Mr. Ma Zhaoxu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. I believe that, under your leadership, the work of the Council will make new progress. I would like to thank Poland for its important contribution to the Council in its capacity as President of the Council last month.

At present, the world's attention is focused on the tense situation in Palestine. China expresses its serious concern over the violent conflict in the border area of Gaza, which has caused heavy casualties. We oppose any acts of violence against civilians and call on Israel and Palestine, particularly Israel, to exercise restraint and to help defuse tensions in order to avoid casualties.

The issue of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East question. Seven decades have passed but the legitimate rights and interests of the Palestinian people are still subject to unfair treatment. Such historical injustices must be redressed. The Council and the international community should uphold justice by taking swift action to respond to the legitimate aspirations of the people of Palestine and the Arab people, intensifying efforts to promote peace and negotiation and facilitating the early resumption of talks between the two sides in order to achieve the two-State solution that will bring about peaceful coexistence between the two countries.

The draft resolution submitted by Kuwait objectively reflects the current situation. It helps protect Palestinian civilians from harm and de-escalates tensions between the two sides. China appreciates Kuwait's efforts to seek the widest possible consensus in an open and constructive manner. China voted in favour of the draft resolution submitted by Kuwait.

I would like to reiterate here that China welcomes and supports all efforts to help ease the situation between the two sides and facilitate the early achievement of the two-State solution and peaceful coexistence between the two countries. China will continue to follow the four-point proposal by Chinese President Xi Jinping for the political settlement of the Palestinian issue, and we will work with the international community and play an active and constructive role in promoting peace in the Middle East.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): Allow me, at the outset, to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency this month. I wish you good luck and all the success in your endeavours. I also thank you for your kind words.

Allow me now to refer to the topic of today's discussion. Let me express our appreciation for Kuwait's transparency in conducting the negotiations on this draft resolution. We would like to thank the Kuwaiti Ambassador and our colleagues from the Kuwaiti delegation for their tremendous efforts to accommodate all comments made by the members of the Security Council. While recognizing those efforts, we were unfortunately not in a position to support the text, as we would have preferred a more balanced result.

We stress that it is the responsibility of Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other militant groups in Gaza to ensure that no protests are used to inspire violence. All acts of violence against civilians, including terrorist rocket attacks, acts of terror and all acts of provocation, incitement and destruction, are unacceptable and must stop.

At the same time, while we recognize Israel's right to protect its border and defend its civilian population, we call on Israel to respect the rights of Palestinian civilians to peaceful protests and to the principle of proportionality in the use of force when defending its legitimate security interests. We call for respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law, particularly with regard to the prohibition of the deliberate targeting of civilians and other protected persons in situations of armed conflict. All actors must comply strictly with their obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law. We call for an end to all actions that make a resumption of negotiations more difficult and reiterate our call for a comprehensive peace between Israelis and Palestinians based on a political settlement and bilateral dialogue leading to a two-State solution.

Finally, let me reiterate what I have already said in the Chamber: there is no justification under any circumstances for deliberate acts of violence against the civilian population, and both Israelis and Palestinians have the right to live in peace and safety.

Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, Mr. President, allow me to wish you and your delegation every success during the Russian presidency of the Security Council in June. I should also like to express my gratitude and appreciation for the excellent work of Poland during its presidency of the Council in May.

We regret the fact that the draft resolution submitted today by the delegation of Kuwait (S/2018/516) was not adopted owing to a negative vote by one of the permanent members of the Security Council. The draft had been subject to extensive negotiations by the members of the Council and was the outcome of broad-based discussions in which, I reiterate, we all participated, and a balanced text had been achieved in which primacy was accorded to safeguarding the lives of civilians, whether Palestinian or Israeli. The fact that the draft was blocked makes it clear that despite the existence of agreement on the protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict, that agreement is insufficient in the face of a veto by a permanent member.

Bolivia, on the basis of its policy of pacifism, reaffirms its strong condemnation of any kind of attack on civilians or on civilian health or education infrastructure in any form, as these are unjustifiable whatever the reason and wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed, given that they are breaches of the most basic tenets of international law. However, we feel compelled to recall the underlying structural cause of the dreadful situation of the Palestinian people, which is the illegal Israeli occupation. The main threat to both Palestinian and Israeli civilians is Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory. We deplore the fact that once again the Security Council has also become a kind of occupied territory, as a result of the negative vote and veto of one of its permanent members.

The situation is much more critical for the Palestinian civilian population, whose right to protection was denied today. For 70 years they have been living under the yoke of the occupying Power, Israel, and the Israel Defense Forces. Who sets up and runs the checkpoints on Palestinian territory? Israel. Who built an annexationist wall? Israel. Who is responsible for the construction of illegal settlements in Palestinian territory? Israel. Who is responsible for preventing the return of more than 6 million Palestinian refugees to their homes? Israel. Who is responsible for the detention of hundreds of children? Israel. Who is responsible for Gaza being besieged and blockaded by air and sea and lacking the basic services of water and electricity? Israel. And, ultimately, who is responsible for the illegal occupation of territories that do not belong to it? Israel.

Bolivia firmly believes that the only long-term solution to the occupation situation facing the Palestinian people is a two-State solution, leading at long last to a free, sovereign and independent Palestinian State, within the internationally recognized pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Council and the General Assembly.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Russian Federation.

The Russian Federation voted in favour of the draft resolution submitted by Kuwait (S/2018/516), on the protection of civilians in the occupied Palestinian territories, because its provisions corresponded to the Russian Federation's principled approach to a settlement in the Middle East. The international community must of course deal with the important questions reflected in the draft resolution, including the humanitarian situation in Gaza, the re-establishment of Palestinian unity and the return of control over the sector to the Palestinian authorities. We must not slack off our efforts in support of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, whose work significantly eases the burden on Palestinian refugees. But all of these steps should be subordinate to a resolution of the main strategic objective of achieving a Palestinian-Israel settlement based on the international legal foundation that we are all familiar with. That settlement presupposes the implementation of a two-State solution based on the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative and the decisions of the Middle East Quartet.

We reiterate that imposing a solution through force and a rejection of direct dialogue is not a viable choice. Such an approach would only exacerbate mistrust and make the prospects for relaunching the negotiation process ever more distant. We firmly condemn the indiscriminate attacks on civilians that have resulted in significant numbers of victims, as well as the firing of rockets into residential areas of Israel.

For our part, as a permanent member of the Security Council and a member of the Quartet, we will continue to encourage both sides to resume direct negotiations as soon as possible, since it is their absence that is the reason for the current problematic situation regarding a Palestinian-Israeli settlement. Russia has repeatedly proposed its services as a mediator and offered to host a summit between the leaders of Palestine and Israel in order to relaunch a direct dialogue, and our proposal still stands. We are ready to work sincerely and energetically with every partner interested in achieving a speedy end to the current impasse on a Middle East settlement.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution contained in document S/2018/520, submitted by the United States of America. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:
United States of America

Against:
Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Kuwait, Russian Federation

Abstaining:
China, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, France, Kazakhstan, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden, United Kingdom

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The draft resolution received 1 vote in favour, 3 against and 11 abstentions. The draft resolution has not been adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements after the voting.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): We regret having had to abstain in the voting on draft resolution S/2018/520, submitted by the United States. That decision was reached after considering the method by which the draft was immediately put to the vote without prior negotiations. It was also reached after considering its substance. The text does not reflect a balanced and impartial view of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict within the framework of internationally agreed parameters of international law and of Council resolutions. The text reflects but one of the many causes of the crisis in the Gaza and does not provide a response or solution to the tragedy afflicting Palestinian and Israeli civilian populations.

That said, we share the concerns expressed in the text, given the activities of Hamas and other armed groups on the Gaza strip. We firmly condemned the firing of rockets into Israeli territory on 29 May and hope that the Security Council also condemns such activity. More generally, France was ready to support several paragraphs of the draft submitted by the United States, starting with those that condemn the firing of rockets from Gaza, which call on Hamas to refrain from committing violent acts, in particular those targeting civilians, and demand that it cease all activities that harm civilian populations close to the separation barrier between Israel and Gaza. I can also list other examples. As we have already underscored with regard to other draft texts, we believe that the Council's responsibility is to provide a general response to the crisis in Gaza, which is not reflected in the text we have before us.

Despite the discord I just mentioned with regard to the overall imbalance of the amendments presented, once again we stood ready to engage in constructive discussions with a view to sharing our opinions and, if possible, drafting one text on which we could vote. But, as I explained earlier, because of the method by which the text was put to the vote and its substance, we had no other option but to abstain in the voting.

All in all, today's meeting is another missed opportunity for the Council. It is regrettable, of course, but the Council can count on France, as a friend of Israelis and Palestinians, to never give up.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to congratulate the delegation of the Russian Federation on having assumed the presidency of the Security Council and wish it every success in its work.

Secondly, I would like to thank the Ambassador of Poland for the excellent manner in which she steered the work of the Council in May.

We deplore the fact that, despite the efforts of the facilitator and other members of the Council, we were unable to reach a substantive agreement. We would like to underscore that Peru agrees with some of the proposals the United States included in its draft resolution (S/2018/520). We believe in particular that all terrorist acts committed against the Israeli civilian population and perpetrated by organizations such as Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, in particular the recent firing of rockets, must be firmly condemned.

We would have liked to have been able to consider and discuss such proposals during our consultations so that they could be reflected in a text to which everyone was wholly committed. To that end, we also believed that it was important to reaffirm our continued recognition of Israel's right to guarantee its security and legitimate defence. Nonetheless, we abstained in the voting on the draft resolution submitted the United States because serious developments on the ground must be assessed holistically and impartially.

Peru has made a constructive and positive contribution to the negotiations facilitated by the delegation of Kuwait, as it attempted to reach a consensus-based and balanced final document that reflected the legitimate concerns of Council members, with regard to the current deteriorating situation. In that regard, in addition to highlighting the role of its delegation, we would like to thank Kuwait for its draft text (S/2018/516) because it reflects many of the concerns conveyed by our delegation during negotiations, which is why we voted in favour of it.

Our action on that and other items on the Security Council agenda is primarily geared towards building consensus that would enable the protection of civilians, in line with international humanitarian law, and addressing the root causes of conflicts, in particular in the case of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which has serious implications for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Lastly, we believe that it is urgent that the parties resume negotiations towards a two-State solution with safe and internationally recognized borders.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I congratulate Russia on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. We

deeply admire and thank Poland for the manner in which it conducted business as president of the Council in May.

It is highly regrettable that the Council was unable to find unity around a meaningful decision in response to the situation in and around Gaza over the past few months. Sweden voted in favour of the draft resolution presented by Kuwait (S/2018/516) for a number of reasons.

First, it calls for full respect by all parties of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including with regard to the protection of the civilian population. The draft resolution requests that the Security-General recommend a mechanism for that purpose.

Secondly, the text condemns all acts of violence, including acts of terrorism. It deplores both excessive disproportionate and indiscriminate force by Israeli forces against civilians in Palestine and the firing of rockets from Gaza into civilian areas in Israel.

Thirdly, it calls for immediate steps to end the closure of Gaza. While fully understanding the legitimate security concerns of Israel, Palestine and Egypt, we have repeatedly called for the lifting of restrictions and full and sustained access for all donors.

Fourthly, the text welcomes and urges further engagement by the Secretary-General and the Special Coordinator to assist in immediate efforts to de-escalate the situation on the ground. We urge all parties to act with utmost restraint to avoid the loss of life, break the cycle of violence and prevent a new conflict.

I would like to pay tribute to the Kuwaiti delegation for facilitating the draft resolution. We all know that the matter is sensitive, but our Kuwaiti colleagues have displayed good faith, inclusiveness, flexibility and transparency during the negotiations process.

With regard to the draft resolution proposed by the United States, we believe that the language does not address the full reality or context of the situation in Gaza, including the violence and tragic loss of life we have witnessed since last March. In addition, the proposal does not contain important language on international humanitarian law and humanitarian access, which are of fundamental importance to the people on the ground. The draft resolution does not address the end result of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for which the Council has been striving for many years — a negotiated two-State solution based on international law, previous agreements, relevant United Nations resolutions and known parameters. Furthermore, the draft resolution was not presented for negotiations or consultations among the members of the Council, in accordance with established procedure. For those reasons, while sympathetic to many aspects of the draft, we abstained in the voting on the text.

While the Council could not agree today, we must not abdicate our responsibility under the Charter. On Wednesday, the Special Coordinator clearly warned us of how close to the brink of war we currently are and of the pressing humanitarian situation in Gaza (see S/PV.8272). The Council must come together to address the crisis and the tension. Otherwise, we risk sliding into another devastating conflict like we did four years ago. This is indeed about conflict prevention.

The Special Coordinator presented a plan last week that included the urgent implementation of already approved projects for Gaza, which would have immediate benefits for the daily lives of people, revive efforts to empower the Palestinian Authority to take up its responsibilities in Gaza, and sustain the 2014 ceasefire understandings on the ground, including halting the militant build-up.

Sweden stands ready to contribute to efforts in the Security Council to take such measures forward with renewed urgency and determination.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): We would like to commend Ambassador Joanna Wronecka and her team for an excellent presidency of the Security Council in the month of May.

My statement relates to both draft resolutions. First of all, we thank Kuwait for taking the initiative to present a draft resolution that addresses the recent crisis in Gaza (S/2018/516). We are thankful for the transparent process and extensive efforts undertaken by the delegation to accommodate the concerns of Council members. We highly appreciate the continuous engagement by Kuwait with Council members in drawing up its draft resolution.

As we have said before, the Security Council should be able to unite and formulate a joint response to the developments of the past weeks. We regret that we have failed to do so today. We witnessed the repeated protests in Gaza and the heavy-handed Israeli response that led to the death of 110 Palestinians and many more

injured. This was the highest number of casualties recorded since the end of the 2014 hostilities. The firing of rockets and mortars by Palestinian militant groups on 29 May and the following counterattacks were the most serious escalation since 2014. As we also discussed in the Security Council yesterday, this again shows that the risk of escalation and the violence spiralling out of control is very high.

Protection of civilians is crucial, as both Palestinian and Israeli civilians should not have to live in fear. Regrettably, the Kuwaiti draft resolution that was put to a vote today did not fully reflect our concerns with regard to addressing the needs of all civilians nor the negative role of Palestinian militant groups in Gaza specifically, nor remaining questions on the international protection mechanism. We welcome the fact that the draft resolution submitted by the United States (S/2018/520) condemns the role of Hamas, but it does not cover the broader context or Israel's responsibilities and obligations. That is why we abstained in the voting on both draft resolutions.

We repeat our call on all parties to exercise restraint in order to avoid escalation and prevent incidents that put the lives of both Palestinian and Israeli civilians at risk. We confirm our firm support for the work and proposals of Mr. Mladenov. It is of the utmost importance that the efforts to address the crisis in Gaza continue, in order to bring humanitarian relief to those in need and to prevent further escalation. We call on all parties to engage constructively.

In conclusion, we confirm our strong commitment to the peace process — a process that must result in the two-State solution, which is the only way to bring about a sustainable solution to the crisis in Gaza. It is the only way to fulfil the aspirations of both sides and to put an end to the conflict. It is the only way to achieve the just and lasting peace that Israelis and Palestinians long for and deserve.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakstan): Kazakhstan regrets that we cannot achieve unity in the Security Council on the two draft resolutions that were submitted today (S/2018/516 and S/2018/520). My delegation notes the importance of continuing to strive towards achieving a well-balanced draft and welcomes all efforts to that end. We appreciate the efforts of the Kuwaiti and United States delegations in trying to reach the desired result in the draft resolutions upon which we have just voted.

My delegation abstained in the voting on the United States draft resolution because we still would have liked to see a more balanced and all-embracing draft as well as a more thorough preparatory process for consideration and elaboration of a proposed text. Unfortunately, that was not the case today. Moreover, we would prefer a draft that contributes to finding common ground and bring parties to work together towards a peaceful future. As we always say in the Council, the only possible way is through direct dialogue, political and diplomatic means and confidence-building measures. To our regret, references to peaceful means and credible and direct negotiations were omitted in the United States draft resolution.

Upon consideration and careful review, we believe that the best course of action is one that avoids greater divisiveness between the two sides and thereby further impedes the peace process.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): In my statement today, I would like to address both failed draft resolutions (S/2018/516 and S/2018/520), as each has failed in a different ways. I would like to thank and express our appreciation to Ambassador Joanna Wronecka and her colleagues in the Polish mission for the excellent leadership they provided to the Security Council until yesterday. We look forward to a very successful Russian presidency this month. Of course, we count on your wisdom, Mr. President.

Ethiopia is a friend to both the Israelis and the Palestinians, and the ties we have with both peoples have deep sociological and historical roots. Our position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has always been consistent and principled.

With regard to the recent developments surrounding the escalation of violence in the occupied Palestinian territory and the events that took place in Gaza, we have had the opportunity to express our position on the matter a number of times recently. We have called on Israel to show maximum restraint and expressed our deepest sorry and sympathy for the loss of lives. As we said last time (see S/PV.8272), we believe that Israel's right to self-defence is a right that carries with it the responsibility to ensure proportionality.

On the other hand, we are also deeply concerned by the indiscriminate firing of rockets by Palestinian militants from Gaza towards southern Israel and underscored that Hamas and the leaders of the demonstrations have the responsibility to prevent all

violent actions and provocations. We know — and everyone knows — that these rockets did not cause much damage, either in terms of lives lost or property destroyed, but they compromise the clarity of the Palestinians' legitimate protest for justice, which we support wholeheartedly. We are second to none in this regard.

These latest developments undoubtedly undermine the serious efforts by the international community to improve the situation in Gaza. We have engaged constructively in the negotiation process on the Kuwaiti draft that was vetoed earlier, and we have presented input that we thought was important to balance the text. We thank and appreciate all of Kuwait's efforts to address most, if not all, of our concerns. That said, we still feel it would have been appropriate to explicitly condemn recent actions by Hamas, particularly in the light of the most recent developments. Unlike Sweden, we felt that more should have been done to balance the draft resolution in that regard. This is what has led to the situation we find ourselves in today, having to vote on two competing draft resolutions. Our proposal would have helped to avoid this situation. The draft resolution submitted by the United States was circulated yesterday, and was put in blue without giving us the opportunity to provide the necessary input with a view to maintaining the right balance. While it certainly addresses the concerns we had with regard to Hamas, it shifts the whole narrative in another direction that we do not believe is proper, fair or helpful. As we said the day before yesterday (see S/PV.8272), it is crucial to get the narrative right. If we miss that, we miss everything. What matters is the narrative.

In that regard, it is absolutely critical to stress that the Palestinians' quest to assert their rights and ensure their self-determination by establishing an independent State must not be overshadowed by a narrative that seeks to focus on terrorism. We trust that the Council is aware of that and will not lose sight of that very critical point, which is more important than supporting a draft resolution that ends up being vetoed. That partly explains why we abstained in the voting on both draft resolutions.

We believe that it would have been better to narrow the differences and enable the Council to send the right message by adopting a consensus resolution in response to the most recent developments in Gaza. There is no denying the fact that those developments have once again brought the Israeli-Palestinian dispute back to the fore, underscoring the urgency of reinvigorating the peace process without further delay. It remains absolutely imperative to work towards de-escalating this dangerous situation in order to protect civilians, break the cycle of violence and resume the much-needed peace process so as to save the two-State formula, which is a long-held position of the United Nations and the international community.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): Kuwait voted against draft resolution S/2018/520. At the outset, I would like to underscore that our vote does not mean that we do not condemn all acts of violence targeting civilians. We have stressed that in our previous statements in meetings on the situation in the occupied territories, including the Palestinian question. We condemn all acts of violence targeting civilians committed by anyone, anywhere and at any time.

However, the draft resolution submitted by the United States that we have voted against is simply biased in favour of the Israeli occupying Power. It justifies its illegal and illegitimate practices and policies in the occupied territories. It turns a blind eye to the recent tragic events and massacres perpetrated by the occupation forces against dozens of civilians and peaceful protesters. It encourages the occupying Power to continue its illegitimate practices and violations of the relevant international law and Security Council resolutions. It includes no reference to protecting Palestinian civilians, lifting the blockade on Gaza or even reducing the restrictions on the movement of goods and people. Moreover, the right to self-defence should not apply to the aggressor and occupier. The draft resolution should therefore call for an end to the occupation. For those reasons, we voted against the draft resolution.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Russian Federation.

The Russian Federation voted against draft resolution S/2018/520, submitted by the United States, on the situation in the Palestinian occupied territories, although we would be ready to agree with some of its provisions. We certainly recognize Israel's right to security. Our vote is connected to the fact the document represents the latest attempt by the United States to revise the international legal basis for a settlement in the Middle East. Not only that, it also included elements that do not correspond to Russia's position. The United

States has repeatedly urged the members of the Security Council to maintain a balanced view when considering crisis situations in the Middle East. However, it upset that balance in its own draft resolution.

We are concerned about the fact that the draft resolution of the United States did not include any calls for creating conditions conducive to resuming talks on final status issues, with the aim of finding a path to a lasting settlement on the basis of a two-State solution for both Israel and Palestine, which would exist in security within internationally recognized borders. Even references to the Arab Peace Initiative and the Middle East Quartet, which remains the unique mediation mechanism approved by the Security Council, were removed.

We encourage the commencement of practical work aimed at launching direct Palestinian-Israeli negotiations.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine.

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): We congratulate the Russian Federation on its presidency of the Security Council and would like to sincerely thank you, Mr. President, for your ready response to the request to convene today's meeting. We would also like to recognize Poland for its skilled leadership of the Security Council last month, including the meetings held to address the Palestinian question and the important debates on international law and the protection of civilians, which are so relevant to the grave crisis we are facing right now. We will never forget the Permanent Representative of Poland's humane gesture when she asked Security Council members to stand for a minute of silence in honour of the Palestinian innocents killed by Israeli forces (see S/PV.8256). We appreciate that and will never forget it.

We would like to express our deep appreciation to our brother country of Kuwait for submitting draft resolution S/2018/516, which the Security Council just voted on, and for the Kuwaiti delegation's tireless efforts to ensure the Council's serious consideration of our repeated calls for international protection for the Palestinian people. We commend the Kuwaiti delegation for the comprehensive and transparent process it and other Council members undertook to advance the issue. We regret, however, the extremely evil intent aimed at undermining that process and the Council's credibility and authority.

We are grateful to all the countries that voted in favour of the draft resolution, despite the veto cast today by the United States, which regrettably prevented its adoption, and despite the ensuing tensions and confusion. We would like to convey our deep appreciation to Kuwait, Bolivia, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, France, Kazakhstan, Peru, Sweden and the Russian Federation for standing firmly on principle, responding to the urgency of the situation and standing unequivocally on the side of international law with regard to Palestine, including on the protection of civilians. Indeed, today's vote sends important messages that must be recognized, including the following.

First, there is a severe protection crisis in the occupied Palestinian territory, including in East Jerusalem and particularly in the Gaza Strip, due to Israel's illegal policies and practices, such as its use of force against Palestinian civilians conducting peaceful protests and its blockade of Gaza, among other oppressive and punitive measures against our people.

Secondly, Israel's killing and injuring of Palestinian civilians will not be tolerated and cannot be excused. The occupying Power must fully abide by its obligations under international law.

Thirdly, the Palestinian people are entitled to protection in accordance with international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and the Security Council's obligations and commitments to protecting civilians in armed conflict.

Fourthly, immediate steps must be taken to end Israel's closure and restrictions on Gaza, and ensure the sustained opening of the crossing points for the normal movement and access of persons and goods. This entirely illegal, inhumane and suffocating Israeli blockade must end.

Fifthly, maximum restraint is required on the part of all parties, as are immediate steps to stabilize the situation and reverse the negative trends on the ground.

Sixthly, it is time to seriously consider measures to guarantee the safety, protection and well-being of the Palestinian people, including through the establishment of an international protection mechanism. The Palestinian leadership, including President Mahmoud

Abbas, has long called for such measures, and we are grateful that despite all of the pressures, this issue has been given due consideration by the Security Council and enjoys the majority support of the Council's members. Their votes today refute the premise that the Palestinian people are the exception to the rules and principles of international law, reaffirming instead that they are entitled to the rights and legal protections to which all peoples are entitled — reinforcing the universality of the law and its application to this conflict. They have rejected the might-over-right strategy, sending a clear message that no one is exempt from the law — not even Israel, regardless of the exceptionalism it has for too long enjoyed.

Of course, the final outcome of today's vote is extremely disappointing but, unfortunately, not surprising. While we had sincerely hoped and exerted all efforts to ensure that the Security Council would uphold its duties pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations and act responsibly to address the protection crisis being endured by the Palestinian people, we have never underestimated the obstacles in that regard. We deeply regret the Council's continued paralysis on our issue due to the recurrent negative and biased position of one permanent member of the Security Council. We deplore the use of the veto to continue shielding Israel from censure and accountability for its crimes against our people and to wrongly prevent the Council from upholding its Charter duties in the maintenance of international peace and security, including by actions aimed at saving civilian lives.

Moreover, we strongly reject the cynical attempts to delay, undermine and thwart action on this initiative in a manner that denigrates the Council's work and the serious efforts to address these critical matters in accordance with international law and relevant resolutions. We also firmly reject the renewed attempt today to classify our situation as one of terrorism. It is not. We reject that classification. It is about the denial of an entire people's human rights and their oppression and dehumanization every single day and for decades. This is a political, territorial rights and justice issue and we cannot accept the lecturing accusations that the draft presented by Kuwait was in any way biased.

The draft, which was negotiated for more than two weeks realistically, addresses all of the factors of the current crisis, including violence on both sides. If anything, the draft does not go far enough in addressing the nightmare the Palestinian people are living under this criminal Israeli occupation. What we are facing can be described in just a few words declared this week by the Israeli Minister Yuval Steinitz, who said: "I do not exclude the possibility of conquering Gaza and eliminating it once and for all". This is the reality of the constant aggression, threats and existential crisis the Palestinian people are enduring under Israeli occupation, which the current United States Administration refuses to see, refuses to understand, or, in any way properly address.

We will continue our calls and efforts to secure protection for the Palestinian people to ensure their safety and well-being. We will continue to seek accountability and to pursue justice for the victims through all available legal means, including through the International Criminal Court. We await the dispatch of the commission of inquiry established by the Human Rights Council and the findings following a thorough, independent and transparent investigation, as requested by the Secretary-General himself. We will not relent in pressing for answers, including why Palestinian children, women and men were killed and injured so wantonly and wilfully by the Israeli occupying forces under the direct command of Israel's highest political and military leaders and who is to be held responsible.

In spite of today's outcome and the paralysis gripping the Security Council, we will not stop calling for Council action and the implementation of all of its relevant resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016), because it is its duty and obligation to act and to address such gross violations and threats to international peace and security and to ultimately contribute to bringing an end to this injustice and ensuring a just, lasting and peaceful solution to this conflict.

Allow me now to end my statement with a message to our people in Arabic.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

We will continue, on behalf of our steadfast people in the occupied Palestinian territory and the great people of Palestine, to make every effort to raise their voice — the voice of reason and justice — and to end their painful plight. We will spare no effort in calling for respect for our inalienable rights and to achieve our legitimate national aspirations. The result of the voting today will only make us more committed and persistent in working in the Security Council with the sisterly State of Kuwait and all friendly countries, and with the support of our brothers and sisters in the Group of Arab

States; the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries; all of our friends and free, peace-loving States in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America; the General Assembly and every other international forum to end the Israeli occupation of our territory in order to achieve the freedom, dignity and independence of our people. There is no force in this world, however great, that is greater than the determination of our Palestinian people, which has lasted for more than seven decades. There can be nothing more deep-rooted than our history and civilization, which is all about steadfastness and challenge. We will continue to resolutely defend our just cause so that we can live in peace and security in our own independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

To all those who accuse the tens of thousands of Palestinian civilians peacefully protesting against the occupation of being terrorists — and those accusers got nothing but their own vote in the Security Council on their failed draft resolution — we say that the entire Palestinian people, in their millions, are against occupation and the terrorism practiced by the State of Israel, whose latest victim, on this very day, was Razan Ashraf Al-Najjar, a martyr at 21 years of age. She was a paramedic carrying out her humanitarian duties when she was shot in the back by the Israeli enemy. The bullet pierced her heart and ended her life.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Danon (Israel): Before I begin, I would like to congratulate the Russian Federation on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. I would also like to thank the Polish Ambassador for her presidency.

On 15 May the Security Council began its meeting with a moment of silence for the 61 Palestinians killed in Gaza the day before (see S/PV.8256). As members stood and paid their respects in mourning, Hamas revealed that nearly 90 per cent of those who had died had been identified as Hamas terrorists. Hamas bragged about it. In an interview, Dr. Salah Bardawil, a Hamas leader, confirmed it. He said, "I am giving you an official figure. Fifty of the martyrs in the recent battle were from Hamas".

On that day, Security Council members stood in solidarity with the terrorists of Hamas. One would think that the absurdity would end there, but it did not. Moments later, at the same meeting, the Ambassador of Bolivia listed some of the names of the people who had died in Gaza, even as Hamas took pride in the fact that the vast majority of them were its own. In the eyes of the Ambassador of Bolivia, Anas Hamdan Salim Qadee, a 21-year-old confirmed member of Hamas's military wing, did not count as a terrorist. He must have forgotten that this wing is the same one that is listed as a terrorist organization by Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the European Union, Japan, the United Kingdom, Egypt and the United States.

On 18 May the Human Rights Council adopted resolution S-28/1 on the recent events in Gaza. The resolution did not even mention Hamas. Despite Hamas's deadly activities and attacks, its attempts to breach the security fence and infiltrate Israel, its incitement of the people of Gaza, its use of innocent Palestinian women and children as human shields, the Human Rights Council chose to turn a blind eye. Today, too, the Security Council attempted to adopt a similar draft resolution (S/2018/516). We acknowledge the United States and all who did not support the draft for their moral clarity. The Security Council also had the opportunity to adopt a draft resolution proposed by the United States (S/2018/520), which rightly named Hamas and the other terrorist groups as the root cause of the conflict. It recognized that peace and stability will never come to our region until the international community is brave enough to call out the terrorists by name. We thank the Americans for taking the right stand. Ambassador Haley made it clear today that the rules of the game are changing here in the Council and that this double standard against Israel will not stand.

Despite the rockets fired by Hamas and Islamic Jihad at our civilians, despite the missile that landed in the yard of a kindergarten, despite the endless mortar shells striking our southern communities, the draft resolution submitted by Kuwait tried to give Hamas a free pass. This was a text born in sin. It tried to continue an alarming trend of absolving Hamas of all responsibility for the violence and death it has caused. It mentioned Israel five times. I do not know who drafted it; many worked actively on it. Five times it mentioned Israel, yet its drafters could not bring themselves to mention Hamas even once. Do they not know how to spell it? This empowers Hamas by granting it the Security Council's stamp of approval. Hamas has ruled Gaza with malice and brutality for 12 years. It has paid its civilians to storm the fence with the explicit goal of increasing the death toll. It has deprived the people of Gaza of their basic human rights. It uses Israel to create

a scapegoat for its own failures. Hamas has launched more than 10,000 rockets into Israeli communities and constructed nearly 40 terror tunnels in order to kidnap and kill Israelis.

It is true that the residents of Gaza need protection; they need protection from Hamas, the same organization that the Council cannot name. I must ask Council members, who are educated people and should understand facts when they see them, if they have not read the news. Have they not heard of the missiles that Hamas fired at Israeli schools or the explosives they placed at the fence? I ask them — I ask the Ambassador of France and the Ambassador of Sweden, who promoted this draft resolution — why did they omit Hamas from the draft resolution? What was the problem with adding it to the text? They had hours of negotiations. I am waiting for an answer. The residents of southern Israel are waiting for an answer.

Did they forget that the European Union has designated Hamas as a terrorist organization since 2003? Does that mean nothing to them? Maybe they can show us what happened at the back door when they drafted the text. I can go over the paragraph in which they speak about rockets flying from Gaza into Israel. They could have added "from Hamas". Maybe they want to explain to us why, when Paris was attacked by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS), the international community stood with Paris, but when Israel is attacked by Hamas, they blame us, the victim. There is no difference between the evil of Hamas and the barbarity of ISIS, Al-Qaida or Boko Haram. Those organizations are no different in their mission to terrorize innocent people. They are all the same. The only draft resolution that the Council should adopt is one that condemns Hamas and designates it a terrorist organization.

When the Palestinians are concerned, the international community never misses an opportunity to blame Israel, but when it is about Palestinians living in danger in other countries, the international community is silent. Looking back at history, in 1991 200,000 Palestinians were expelled from Kuwait after the Gulf War. Many were abused or killed during that expulsion. Kuwaiti officials, and even members of Kuwait's royal family, called for the cleansing of Palestinian neighbourhoods. Today, thousands of Palestinians living in Lebanon are treated like third-class citizens. In Syria, the Yarmouk refugee camp has faced a siege, starvation and Government shelling for the past seven years. What was the world's reaction to Kuwait's abuse of Palestinians in the 1990s? Silence. What about its reaction to Lebanon's years of maltreatment of Palestinians? Silence. And to the situation of the Palestinians in Yarmouk camp in Syria? Silence once again. It seems that there are some in the United Nations who speak for the Palestinians only when Israel is involved. If the world truly wanted to help Palestinians, it would adopt a resolution on their situation in Kuwait, Lebanon or Syria. If it truly wanted to help Palestinians, it would adopt a resolution condemning Hamas, here, today.

Let me make myself clear. Israel will always protect its civilians. We will not allow our citizens to die for the world's distorted sense of fairness. When it comes to the Palestinian civilians who are put in harm's way by the terrorists in Gaza, it is Israel that acts with greater care and respect for human life than almost any other country, especially those that claim to stand in solidarity with the Palestinians.

Thankfully, the biased and hypocritical draft resolution submitted today was not adopted. But the Security Council's moment of silence, the Human Rights Council's resolution S-28/1, adopted on 18 May, and the draft resolution that was introduced today only empower Hamas. They convey the notion that some in the international community actually support Hamas, and confirm to Hamas that its violence and terrorism will surely go unnoticed. They grant Hamas full immunity. The only way to protect the Palestinians in Gaza is by holding Hamas responsible. Those who supported today's draft resolution chose not to protect the Palestinians. Those who did not support it voted for the protection of Israelis and Palestinians.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The representative of Bolivia has asked to make a further statement.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I did not intend to take the floor again, but the assertions by the representative of Israel leave me no alternative. What I cannot permit is his questioning of Bolivia's position with regard to terrorism. Bolivia will always condemn any act of terrorism, whatever the circumstances and wherever it may occur. But now that it is an issue — I am referring to Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories — on the Security Council's agenda, it is also our duty, as members of the Council, elected by the membership of the General Assembly, to condemn

State terrorism, terrorism that is conducted through Israel's Government institutions and that is designed to benefit the Government of Israel, not the Israeli people, for whom we have the greatest respect and concern.

It seemed extremely strange that the representative of Israel should cite the situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Syria as an example, considering that those refugees' right of return to their homes has gone unacknowledged for the past 70 years. Those 6 million refugees are living far from their own homes because of Israeli policy. That is not what Bolivia says; it is what international law says. How long will they continue to prevent those millions of refugees from returning home? The Ambassador of Palestine recalled that today a Palestinian paramedic was killed by a sniper. Is she also a member of Hamas? Are the five-, six- and seven-year-old children who have died in various attacks on Gaza also members of Hamas?

We commend the Human Rights Council's adoption on 18 May of resolution S-28/1, providing for the urgent establishment of an independent commission of inquiry so that the presumed violations of international humanitarian and international human rights law can be investigated. We hope that this will happen and that Israel will allow the commission to enter Israel and the occupied territories, with every assurance that it will be able to conduct an independent and impartial investigation, because, if I may say so, we do not trust the occupying Power's version, which attempts to cover up the essential underlying reason for the situation, which is Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territories. That is what lies at the heart of the matter. When the occupation comes to an end, the refugees can return and the wall of annexation is dismantled, then, and only then, will the Security Council's resolutions be implemented.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The representative of Kuwait has asked to make a further statement.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I will be brief. I would have preferred not to respond to the statement by the representative of Israel. Israel is a State Member of the United Nations, and when it became a member it pledged to respect the Charter of the United Nations. Article 25 of the Charter states that the Members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council. I must therefore ask why Israel does not abide by its commitments. Why does it not implement the Council's resolutions that it is committed to? Why does it not uphold international law and its pledges pursuant to the Geneva Conventions and other international conventions?

With regard to what the representative of Israel said about what he called the events of 1990, I would prefer not to comment because they have no basis in fact. They also have nothing to do with the subject under discussion today.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The representative of Israel has asked to make a further statement. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Danon (Israel): With regard to the statement by the representative of Bolivia, he speaks very passionately, but he should check the facts of the names he mentions in the Security Council. We fact-checked the names he mentioned and found that they were the names of members of Hamas. Every time he mentions a name in the Council, we will check to see if it is the name of a member of Hamas. But I would like to ask him today if he is willing to condemn Hamas for its acts of terror. He speaks very passionately about everything, but we want to hear that condemnation directed at Hamas. Is he able to do that? Is the Kuwaiti Ambassador even able to pronounce the word "Hamas"? We expect him to be brave enough to condemn Hamas here today.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. However, before closing the meeting, I should like to say a few words.

First, I would like to thank all of those who offered words of support for the Russian presidency of the Council for the month of June. We hope to have that support throughout the course of our presidency.

Secondly, I should like to recall that in our discussion, we neglected to mention that 1 June is the International Day for Protection of Children. Most of us have children, and I would like to congratulate everyone on this holiday. We are all big children to one degree or another, and it is therefore a holiday for all of us.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.